

# Virginia Kuulei Berndt, PhD

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## EDUCATION:

- Ph.D.** – Sociology, University of Delaware (2021)  
Comprehensive Exam Areas: Health and Sociological Theory  
Dissertation: *Women's Embodied Experiences with Contraception and its Medicalization*  
(Chair: Ann V. Bell, PhD)
- M.A.** – Sociology, Lehigh University (2016)  
Thesis: *Different Disasters, Differential Impacts: The Effect of Droughts and Floods on Women's HIV Burden in Developing Nations* (Chair: Kelly F. Austin, PhD)
- B.A.** – Sociology and Philosophy, Millersville University of Pennsylvania (2013)  
Thesis: *Life, Money, and Liberty: Religious Frames and the Contraceptive Clause of the Affordable Care Act* (Chair: Carrie Lee Smith, PhD)  
Departmental Honors
- A.A.** – Social Sciences, Harrisburg Area Community College (2011)  
Highest Honors

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS:

Assistant Professor of Sociology – Texas A&M International University (2021-present)

## PUBLICATIONS:

### BOOKS:

Brown, Brian and **Virginia Kuulei Berndt**. 2023. *Body Art (Arts for Health)*. Emerald Publishing.  
[\[Link to Book Listing\]](#)

### PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES: (\*Denotes student co-author)

Neumann, Pamela, **Virginia Kuulei Berndt**, and Ashley Grajeda\*. "Shifting social support: Mexican-American women's navigation of pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum periods during the COVID-19 pandemic." (Conditional acceptance)

Manzer, Jamie L., **Virginia Kuulei Berndt**, and Ann V. Bell. 2023. "Intersections between culture, contraception, knowledge and the body in the USA." *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 25(9): 1164-1179. [\[DOI\]](#)

Manzer, Jamie L., **Virginia Kuulei Berndt**, and Ann V. Bell. 2022. "Comparing methods of long-acting reversible contraception: A qualitative study of Delaware women's perceptions of intrauterine devices and the implant." *Contraception* 113: 73-77. [\[DOI\]](#)

**Berndt, Virginia Kuulei** and Ann V. Bell. 2021. "'This is what the truth is': Provider-patient interactions serving as barriers to contraception." *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness, and Medicine* 25(5): 613-629. [\[DOI\]](#)

**Berndt, Virginia Kuulei** and Ann V. Bell. 2021. "Contextualizing barriers to long-acting reversible contraception in Delaware." *Contraception* 103(6): 439-443. [\[DOI\]](#)

**Berndt, Virginia Kuulei** and Kelly F. Austin. 2021. “Drought and disproportionate disease: An investigation of gendered vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS in less-developed nations.” *Population and Environment* 42(3): 379-405. [\[DOI\]](#)

Austin, Kelly, Mark D. Noble, and **Virginia Kuulei Berndt**. 2021. “Drying climates and gendered suffering: Links between drought, food insecurity, and women’s HIV in less-developed countries.” *Social Indicators Research* 154(1): 313-334. [\[DOI\]](#)

**Berndt, Virginia Kuulei**. 2020. “Contextualizing contraceptive access in disaster settings: A comparison of state-level contraceptive refill policies, Title X clinic availability, and emergency refill laws in California, Texas, South Dakota, and New York.” *Sociological Viewpoints* 34(1): 115-133. [\[DOI\]](#)

**Berndt, Virginia Kuulei**. 2018. “Gender, disaster, and women’s access to contraception and reproductive healthcare.” *Sociology Compass* 12(12): e12645. [\[DOI\]](#)

Austin, Kelly F., Michelle Choi, and **Virginia Berndt**. 2017. “Trading sex for security: Unemployment and the unequal HIV burden among young women in developing nations.” *International Sociology* 32(3): 343-368. [\[DOI\]](#)

**ARTICLES IN PROGRESS:** (\*Denotes student co-author)

**Berndt, Virginia Kuulei** and Ann V. Bell. “Beyond knowledge: Introducing Embodied Aversion through the case of contraception.” (Under Review)

Arsuaga, Jenna\*, **Virginia Kuulei Berndt**, and Nereyda Molina\*. “Does your major matter? Examining the relationship between students’ academic major and the benefits of a Public Health Informatics Undergraduate Research Experience.” (Full draft available)

**INTERVIEWS & MEDIA:**

2023 – Laredo Morning Times. “[Turkey-Syria Relief Effort Panel.](#)”

2022 – E&E News. “[Packing a hurricane go bag? Don’t forget your birth control.](#)”

2022 – Laredo Morning Times. “[Sociology expert weighs in on Roe v. Wade repercussions.](#)”

2022 – Dvino Magazine. “Roe v. Wade decision could affect gay marriage.”

2021 – Vox. “[It’s time to stop describing lifesaving health care as elective.](#)”

2021 – E&E News. “[SCOTUS may limit abortion access. So might climate change.](#)”

2020 – YASS Magazine. “[Virginia Berndt on body positivity & invisible illnesses awareness.](#)”

2020 – UDaily. “[How is COVID-19 Impacting Delawareans?](#)”

**GRANTS AND AWARDS:**

**RESEARCH AND PROGRAMMATIC GRANTS:**

2023-2024 – (Co-Investigator) Multi-Disciplinary Training of the Next Generation of Public Health Practitioners of South Texas, awarded to Cindy Salazar-Collier. Texas A&M International University Innovation Grant. Role: Co-Investigator. Award Amount: \$47,850.

2021-2025 – (Co-Investigator) GET PHIT: Gaining Equity in Training for Public Health Informatics and Technology, awarded to Eric Boerwinkle and Jiaye Zhang. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology: The PHIT Workforce Development Program. Role: Co-Investigator, Committed effort: 20%. Subaward amount: \$453,600.

**2021 – (Principal Investigator)** University Research Grant, Texas A&M International University: “Women’s Experiences with Contraceptive Access and Use at the U.S.-Mexico Border during the COVID-19 Pandemic.” Award amount: \$10,000

**2015 – (Principal Investigator)** Dale S. Strohl Research Fellowship Award, Lehigh University: “Global Environmental Degradation and HIV/AIDS Prevalence among Women.” Award amount: \$5,000

**AWARDS:**

**2023 – TAMIU:** Faculty Advisor of the Year (TAMIU Fashion Society) (Nominated)

**2018 – Natural Hazards Center:** Annual Hazards and Disasters Student Paper Competition

**2016 – Lehigh University:** Donald T. Campbell Social Science Research Prize (Finalist)

**2016 – Lehigh University:** Graduate Life Leadership Award (Honorable Mention)

**2013 – Millersville University:** Outstanding Sociology Senior Award

**RESEARCH ASSISTANT EXPERIENCE:**

**2016-2021: University of Delaware**

“Delaware Contraceptive Access Now (Del-CAN) Evaluation.”  
Principal Investigator: Ann V. Bell, PhD

**2020: Disaster Research Center (DRC), University of Delaware**

“COVID-19: Community Impacts and Adaptation Study.”  
Principal Investigators: Tricia Wachtendorf, PhD; James Kendra, PhD

**2015-2016: Lehigh University**

“Community-Based Research in Bududa, Uganda” (Remote duties from USA).  
Principal Investigator: Kelly F. Austin, PhD

**COURSES TAUGHT:**

**UNDERGRADUATE:**

SOCI 3304: Sociological Theory  
SOCI 4375: Special Topics (Sociology of Disasters)  
SOCI 4375: Special Topics (Health, Medicine, & Society)

**GRADUATE:**

SOCI 5301: Contemporary Studies of Social Problems (Sociology of Reproduction)  
SOCI 5301: Contemporary Studies of Social Problems (Women, Gender, & Health)  
SOCI 5305: Sociology of Health & Illness

**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:**

ASA = American Sociological Association	SFP = Society for Family Planning
ESS = Eastern Sociological Society	SSSP = Society for the Study of Social Problems
ISA = International Sociological Association	SWS = Sociologists for Women in Society
NEEDS = Northern European Emergency & Disaster Studies	UD SOCCJ = U. Delaware Dept. of Sociology & Criminal Justice
OSSD = Organization for the Study of Sex Differences	

**2023 – SSSP:** “Benefits and limitations in online chronic illness education groups.”

**2023 – International Workshop on HIV & Women:** *(Invited)* “Impact of food insecurity.”

2023 – ESS: “News coverage of the right to contraceptives post-*Dobbs*.”

2022 – SSS: “Contextualizing contraceptive access in disaster settings.”

2022 – ESS: “Understandings of and embodied aversion toward contraception.”

2021 – ASA: “The relationship between contraception and the anatomical body.”

2021 – ASA: (*Invited*) “Entering the academic job market during COVID-19.”

2020 – SFP: “Provider and administrator attitudes and experiences with early LARC removal.”

2020 – ASA: “An analysis of the body positive movement’s past, present, and future.”

2020 – SSSP: “Complicating and contextualizing barriers to LARC.”

2020 – ESS: “Providers’ selective incorporation of emerging contraceptive knowledge.”

2020 – ESS: “Reducing unintended pregnancy by increasing access to contraception.”

2019 – ASA: “Women and provider knowledges in contraceptive decision-making.”

2019 – NEEDS: “Droughts and the HIV burden among women in less-developed Nations.”

2019 – OSSD: “Present women’s healthcare policies worsen future disaster impacts.”

2019 – UD SOCCJ Conference: “Hormonal hierarchies among hysterectomy patients.”

2019 – ESS: “Contraceptive knowledges and decision-making at the interactional level.”

2019 – ESS: “Moving beyond the individual: Providers as potential barriers to contraception.”

2018 – ISA: “The effect of droughts & floods on women’s HIV burden.”

2018 – Natural Hazards Workshop: “Disasters and women’s access to contraceptives.”

2018 – UD Grad. Student Forum: “Compromised contraceptive access in disaster settings.”

2018 – ESS: “The medicalization of contraception and decision-making.”

2018 – UD SOCCJ Conference: “Women’s online chronic reproductive illness forums.”

2017 – UD Grad. Student Forum: “IPV against young women in sugar daddy relationships.”

2017 – ESS: “Complicating and contextualizing barriers to contraceptive use.”

2016 – ESS: “Unemployment and the unequal HIV Burden among young women.”

2014 – ESS: “Religious frames and the contraceptive clause of the Affordable Care Act.”

2014 – SWS: “Religious frames and the contraceptive clause of the Affordable Care Act.”

**CONFERENCE ORGANIZING & PRESIDING:**

2024 – SSSP: “Bodily Autonomy and Health.”

2024 – ESS: Mini-Conference on Reproduction

2023 – SSSP: “Invisible Disabilities and the Body in Physical and Virtual Spaces.”

- 2023 – SSSP:** “Reproductive Bodies and Autonomy.”
- 2022 – SSSP:** “Reproductive Justice: Race, Intersectionality, and Health.”
- 2021 – SSSP:** “Mind, Body, and Fitness.”
- 2021 – SSSP:** “Being Made Vulnerable in COVID-19: Global Responses and Perspectives.”
- 2018 – ASA:** Roundtable – “Intimate Partner Violence.”
- 2017 – UD Grad. Student Forum:** “(en)Gendered History, Governance, & Social Institutions”

**INVITED LECTURES & PRESENTATIONS:**

**INVITED GUEST LECTURES**

- 2024 – TAMIU:** “Social Problems”
- 2023 – TAMIU:** “Songs & Signs”
- 2023 – TAMIU:** “Your Voice, My Voice, Our Voice”
- 2022 – TAMIU:** “Social Warrior for Issues that Matter”
- 2021 – American University:** “Power, Privilege, & Inequality”
- 2020 – Millersville University:** “Social Statistics”
- 2020 – University of Florida:** “Medical Sociology”
- 2018 – University of Central Florida:** “Medical Sociology”

**INVITED PRESENTATIONS**

- 2023 – De Montfort University:** “Mentoring Needs of Conducting Sensitive Research”
- 2023 – TAMIU:** “Turkey-Syria Earthquake Relief Effort”
- 2022 – TAMIU:** “Ecofeminism, HIV, and Droughts”
- 2021 – University of Delaware:** “Drying Climates and Gendered Suffering”
- 2020 – University of Delaware:** “Hindsight is 2020: COVID-19 Community Impacts”

**SELECTED ACADEMIC SERVICE & AFFILIATIONS:**

**TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

- College of Arts & Sciences (COAS):
  - **2021-2023:** Graduate Council Member (Appointed)
  - **2022-present:** TAMIU’s Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Committee (TIDE)
- Job Search Committees:
  - **Fall 2024:** Assistant Professor, Psychology
  - **Fall 2023:** Visiting Assistant Professor, Art
  - **Fall 2023:** Assistant Professor, Public Administration
  - **Fall 2022:** Advanced Assistant/Associate Professor, Criminology
- Sociology Program:
  - **2023-present:** Master’s Thesis Chair: Ashley Grajeda
  - **2023-present:** Master’s Thesis Committee Member: Jillian Garcia
  - **2023-present:** Graduate Advisory Committee Member: Angelica Ramirez
  - **2021-present:** Assessment Co-Coordinator (BA, MA Programs)

- **2021-2022:** Master's Thesis Committee Member: Erica Benavides-Moore
- **2021-2022:** Graduate Advisory Committee Member: Iraida Elizondo
- **2022-present:** TAMIU Fashion Society: Faculty Advisor
- **2022-2023:** Sames Mentorship Program: Mentor to two local high school seniors

**AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (ASA) – SECTION ON THE SOCIOLOGY OF BODY & EMBODIMENT**

- **2020-2021; 2023-2025:** Council Member
- **2020-present:** Social Media Manager: Communications Committee
- **2019-present:** Member: Mentorship, Nominations, & Membership Committees
- **2021:** Contributor: “Ask a Mentor” Column

**SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS (SSSP)**

- **2023-2025:** Health, Health Policy, and Health Services Division: Co-Chair
- **2023:** Health Division: Graduate Student Paper Award Committee
- **2022:** Sport, Leisure, and the Body Division: Graduate Student Paper Award Committee

**MANUSCRIPT REFEREE SERVICE (BY JOURNAL):**

BMJ Open	International Sociology
Disasters	Qualitative Health Research
Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness, & Medicine	Qualitative Sociology
Gender, Place, & Culture	Social Problems
Health Education and Behavior	Social Science Research
International Journal of Comparative Sociology	Sociological Inquiry
International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction	Sociology Compass
	The Lancet Planetary Health
	Women's Health

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS:**

American Sociological Association  
 Eastern Sociological Society  
 International Sociological Association  
 Society for the Study of Social Problems  
 Sociologists for Women in Society  
 Southern Sociological Society